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Kitchen Knives

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Kitchen Knives

By Mardelle Fortier

My mother would stand at the kitchen sink, sudsing dishes and plotting murders. Her pale hands deep in bubbles, nearly losing her worn wedding ring, she'd concoct twists and turns in stories. Gorgeous heroines ran into the enormous dark, and leaped across ravines to catch the killer before finding true love. She was lost to me as her dark eyes took on a faraway look and she stared off out the window.

She was as lost as when she read Agatha Christie or Daphne du Maurier or Phyllis Whitney - glasses off, lower lip jutting, body motionless. Now she stood, one foot planted in front of the other, her solid body stationed close to the sink, only her hands moving. Absentmindedly she rinsed a plate, placed it on the rack, scalded a saucer, drowned a spoon.

Later she would type novels with the old Smith-Corona on clean white paper. Now she stood, wrists far down in grimy water, thick with grease, scrubbing and scraping, silently plotting a crime.